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Martin Mador, Legislative Chair

Energy and Technology Committee
March 17, 2011

Testimony In Support Of
SB 1168 AAC An Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the volunteer Legislative Chair for the Sierra Club-Connecticut Chapter. I hold a Masters of Environmental Management degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

The Sierra Club, the nation's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization, has recently launched a new national Electric Vehicles Campaign. We see electric vehicles (EVs) as an important way to significantly slash carbon emissions and reduce our dangerous dependence on imported oil. Even at current electric rates, fuel costs for EVs will be much lower than for gasoline or diesel powered cars. EVs of course emit no tailpipe pollution. Various studies show that emissions from incrementally increased electrical generation would be 30-65% lower than from equivalent gas powered vehicles.

Car manufacturers have shown a significant interest in producing EVs. We expect that more than 20 new EV models will come on the market in the next few years, including those already introduced from General Motors, Tesla, and Nissan.

A whole new industry is being developed around EVs, with major job and economic opportunities in battery and auto manufacturing, smart grid technology, and electrical work. EVs will provide a significant source of new green jobs.

Gas prices are unstable and rising. EVs enable drivers to avoid the gas pump altogether and to fill up instead on electricity at a much lower cost. Americans send up to a third of a trillion dollars overseas each year to purchase foreign oil, often produced by nations that are unstable or unfriendly. Oil purchases are also responsible for about 50% of the US trade deficit. As Americans struggle to cope with rising and volatile gas prices, vehicle innovation provides real options. As we come to rely more and more on natural gas and renewable sources for electrical generation, greater independence from oil means an economically stronger and more secure America.

The Sierra Club strongly supports SB 1168 as an important step in developing the state's electrical infrastructure to support EVs. Further information can be found at <http://www.sierraclub.org/electric-vehicles/default.aspx>

We have a few specific comments related to the bill:

The bill encourages installation of public charging stations. The owner of such a station, perhaps a shopping mall, would then become a reseller of electricity if there was a fee for use of the station by the car owner. Does this issue need to be addressed in legislation?

It is not clear whether the language of Section 2 actually includes EVs, as we believe it was intended to.

Section 6b directs OPM to plan for Level III public fast charging EV stations. While these charging units will be more appealing to many consumers, they are much more expensive than Level I and Level II chargers. Cities and states throughout the US are experimenting with the best combination of Level I, II, and III chargers, where to place them, and who will pay for the electricity. The legislation should not tie the state to only Level III chargers but rather should call for development of a plan that is more flexible and responsive to the needs and financial abilities of consumers as well as public and private entities.

Time of use metering will be important in encouraging consumer purchases of EVs. A determination should be made whether the language of Section 55 of SB 1 is sufficient for time of use meters installed in structures which have EV charging facilities. Over night charging will help balance time of day loads on the grid, and ensure that existing transmission and distribution capacity is sufficient to power EVs to be purchased in the coming years.

The addition of EV charging stations should not increase the assessed value of a property for tax purposes.

The permitting process for installation of EV charging equipment should be an expedited and no cost one.

As there are significant societal benefits arising for a transition from gas powered cars to EVs, the state should offer financial incentives for consumer purchases. This is strategic priority number 2 in the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Council Final Report, September, 2010.

OPM and/or DEP should be directed to consult with neighboring states to develop interstate corridors of charging stations, strategic priority number 5 of the report.